

*The Success of the GOSPEL, through the
MINISTRATION of weak and sinful MEN;
a Proof of the POWER, WISDOM and
GOODNESS of G O D.*

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S E R M O N,

PREACHED BEFORE

The SCOTS CHURCH,
LONDON-WALL,

DECEMBER 22, 1774,

At the ORDINATION of

The Rev. CHARLES NICOLSON, A. M.

One of the Ministers of the BRITISH Reformed Church at
AMSTERDAM:

BY

HENRY HUNTER, D. D.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE CHARGE,

BY

The Rev. GEORGE TURNBULL.

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The Success of the Gospel, and the
Ministry of the Word, in
a View of the Power, Wisdom and
Goodness of God.

A
SERMON

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stration of weak and sinful Men; a Proof of
the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of GOD.*

S E R M O N.

II COR. iv. 7.

*But we have this Treasure in earthen Vessels, that the
Excellency of the Power may be of GOD, and not
of us.*

In CONNECTION with

EXO D. xx. 19.

*And they said unto Moses, speak thou with us, and we
will hear; but let not GOD speak with us lest we die.*

EVER since the Day, that the first Parents
of Mankind furnished themselves with a
fatal Reason, for flying from the Presence
of the LORD GOD, and for attempting to conceal
their Shame amidst the Trees of the Garden,
every personal and immediate Approach of the
Deity has been an Object of Terrour to them,
and their sinful Posterity.

A 2

FEAR

FEAR continually presses hard upon the Footsteps of Guilt; and what we fear, we naturally shun: Hence we should keep at a perpetual Distance from God, did not his Power compel, his Justice drag, or his Mercy allure us into his Presence. — The Appearance of the Most High, as a righteous Judge and omnipotent Avenger, were certain and swift Destruction to the guilty: And so fearful is the Breach which Sin has made between God and Man, so alarming are the Suggestions of an awakened Conscience, that even the gentle Intimations of Pity and Love, if displayed in native, celestial Majesty, must dazzle the feeble Eye, and stun the trembling Ear of conscious Demerit.

WHEN therefore, the Father of Mercies was pleased, on special Occasions, to reveal his Grace to the Children of Men, the Voice of the Eternal did not rend the Vault of Heaven, and shake the Pillars of the Earth; nor did even one of the flaming Ministers descend from before the Throne of God, and proclaim to an astonished World, by the Trumpet of Jehovah, the wonderful Tidings of * “Peace on Earth, and good Will to “Men,” but in Condescension to human Weak-

* Luke ii. 14.

ness, and in Commiseration of human Woe, the God of Consolation, * “ at fundry Times, and in “ divers Manners, spake unto the Fathers by “ the Prophets.” He spake to sinful Creatures, by Men of like Passions with themselves — by their fellow Sinners. When Angels were sent to convey the Will of God to Mankind, they assumed the Robes of Meekness, and spake in the Language of Sympathy and Friendship.

AND when at length, in the Depth of infinite Wisdom, and in the Riches of Free Grace, God thought it good to address himself to his fallen Creatures, † “ by his Son—the Brightness of “ his Glory, and the express Image of his Per- “ son.” ‡ “ The Word was made *Flesh*, and “ dwelt among us.” When the Prince of Peace vouchsafed to come for our Salvation. § “ Verily “ he took not on him the Nature of Angels, but “ he took on him the Seed of *Abraham*.”—He became Man, that without inspiring Terrour, he might converse with Men, and in Accents of their own, gently persuade them of the tender Mercies of God, and win them to Heaven.—The Persons employed as ministring Servants to

* Heb. i. 1.

† John i. 14.

‡ Heb. i. 2, 3.

§ Heb. ii. 16.

his great Design, to declare the Doctrine of Reconciliation, to preach among the *Gentiles* the unsearchable Riches of *Christ*, to point out the Way to eternal Life, were such as needed all the Blessings of that Gospel, which they preached to others : The precious Treasure was committed to earthen Vessels, that the Excellency of the Power might be of God. Such has been the State of Christianity in every Age ; such it is at this Day, and thus it is evidently designed to continue to the End of the World.

THE Language of the Text is beautifully figurative, and conveys this Idea : The Dispensation of the Gospel of Peace, the most valuable Possession conferred by God upon Mankind, is put into the Hands of weak and fallible Men, that its Success may appear to flow, not from the Ability or Skill of the Dispenser, but from its own intrinsic Worth and Importance, and from the irresistible Power of its great Author : — It is like a Treasure of Gold laid up in an earthen Pot, or a precious Jewel deposited in a rough Casket ; those valuable Commodities communicate a Dignity and Value to that which contains them, but can derive none from the Connection : The Vessel may be broken in Pieces, the Casket thrown

thrown as a worthless Thing away, and yet the Treasure retain its full Weight, and the Gem sparkle in all its native Lustre.

It is my Design, upon this Occasion, in the humble Hope of Divine Assistance, to consider the present State of the Gospel Ministry and of the Christian Church, in this particular Point of View; as an Evidence of the Wisdom and Goodness of Providence, that we may be together led to the grateful and devout Acknowledgment of it, and to an entire Dependance upon that Almighty Power, which alone can render the Means of Grace effectual.

HOWEVER the Matter may appear upon a first, and to a superficial Observation; though it might be apprehended that Perfection of moral Character, and a higher Order of Talents should have been joined to the Ministration of a pure and perfect Religion; by attending more closely, we shall find that the great Ends which God evidently has in View, in the Gospel of his Son, are most effectually accomplished by that Mode of Dispensation which we see he has established.—Without insisting on the general Proposition, that whatever
infinite

infinite Wisdom has determined, is certainly best, the Propriety of the present Establishment of Things in the Christian Church, according to the Apostle's Idea in the Text, will appear, whether we consider it as respecting the Ministers of the Gospel themselves; or those to whom it is dispensed; or Him, whose Message the Gospel is, and on whose Blessing all its Efficacy depends. And

I. GOD has appointed the Gospel to be preached by Men, to Men, for the Sake of the Ministers of it.

ONE of the most infallible Methods of acquiring Knowledge of any Kind, is to communicate that which we already possess, to others: While we teach, we necessarily learn; while we study the Illumination of our Hearers, the Darkeness of our own Minds is thereby dispelled. Art thou called then, my Brother, to the Work of the Ministry, to be * “ a Guide of the Blind, a “ Light of them which are in Darkness, an In- “ structor of the foolish, a Teacher of Babes,” to lead Men to the Knowledge of the Truth, that

* Rom. ii. 19, 20.

they may be saved? By that Call, in whatever Manner conveyed, thou art invited, in the most affecting Terms, to study the Truth as it is *Jesus* upon thy own Account; to understand and feel for thyself what thou wouldst wish others to understand and feel through thy Means. To all the Motives, towards the Pursuit of that Wisdom which is from above, and which maketh wise unto Salvation, in common to thee with other Men, an additional and a striking one arises out of thy particular Office and Profession. The great Head of the Church, the great Fountain of Light has left thee no Choice here, but has laid thee under a gracious and gentle Necessity of being acquainted with the glorious Mystery of Godliness, that is, with the Things which belong to thy everlasting Peace.—Many may, and do perish through lack of Knowledge; but God has mercifully secured thee on this Side; and canst thou but account this as an additional Instance of his Goodness, and an additional Claim upon thy Gratitude and Love?

AGAIN, it is evident that He who would have the Gospel preached to every Creature, and its Benefits universally diffused, must have in-

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tended,

tended, that those who were to convey such inestimable Blessings to the World should themselves liberally partake thereof. It was a Law, worthy of the bountiful and mercifully considerate Parent of the Universe, who preserveth Man and Beast, * “Thou shalt not muzzle the Ox, when he treadeth out the Corn.” † “Doth God take care for Oxen?” And are not ye of much more Value than many of those? Will he, who has sent us to dispense to the poor and needy, of the Fulness which is treasured up in *Christ*, forbid us to take a Supply for our own Necessities? Will he, who is pleased to employ us, in directing his People to the heavenly *Canaan*, obstruct the Passage against ourselves, and say, but as for you, ye shall in no wise enter therein? Shall the Steward starve, while he feeds the Household with Bread? Surely not. The Apostle of the *Gentiles* could, from his own sweet Experience, bear Testimony to the Grace of God in this Respect: ‡ “The God of all Comfort, says he, comforteth us in all our Tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any Trouble, by the Comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” The Treasure

* Deut. xxv. 4. † 1 Cor. ix. 9. ‡ 2 Cor. i. 3, 4.

committed to the Ministers of the Gospel is not the Hoard of a Miser, only to be looked at, and reckoned over; but the rich and the continually abounding Store of the bountiful Proprietor of all Things, which grows by Communication, and whose Use is its Increase.—How often has it been found, that the necessary Intercourse betwixt Ministers and the afflicted, tempted, desponding Children of God, hath, through the divine Blessing, proved the Means of alleviating the Distresses, of subduing the Temptations, of removing the Doubts, of healing the painful Wounds of the former as well as of the latter, of conveying Peace and Joy to the Minister, as well as to them among whom he ministers?—And besides, by conversing with Men in all the Varieties of Situation in human Life, and in Religion, the Teachers of Christianity may be, and often are led to the Discovery and the Improvement of many important Particulars in their own Characters and Conduct, which they had not attended to before, and which, but for their Office, they had not found out, till the Season of profiting had been lost.

FARTHER, it is meet that the Gospel Treasure should be in earthen Vessels, not only for the Purposes of extending the Knowledge, and of promoting the Edification and Comfort of Ministers, but also, in order to form their Tempers, to impress their Characters, and to regulate their Behaviour into the Similitude of their divine Master, the meek and lowly *Jesus*. The grand and comprehensive Aim of Christianity is to teach Men Humility. For this End, * “ *Christ* “ humbled himself, and became of no Reputation”; for this End, he would have his Gospel preached by such as, in this Respect, bore some Resemblance to himself; and for this End, he furnished his ministring Servants with every Argument to exemplify and to inculcate Humility. Their Name, their Office, their personal Characters, their Relation to the blessed *Jesus*, and above all his Example, call upon them, with one Voice, to be lowly in Heart, that they may teach the World to be humble. The Distinctions which prevail among Men upon Earth are calculated to feed the Pride and Vanity of the distinguished, and the Badges of Superiority are carefully contrived to conceal or efface, as much as

* Phil. ii. 8.

possible, every Thing mean and mortifying in the Condition of him who wears them; but this Order is quite reversed in *Christ's* Kingdom; one of the great and fundamental Laws of its Constitution runs thus, * “Whosoever will be
 “great among you, let him be your Minister;
 “and whosoever will be chief among you, let
 “him be your Servant: Even as the Son of Man
 “came not to be ministred unto, but to minister.”——To rise in any Kingdom is to approach towards the Sovereign, and to resemble him: From the Nature of *Christ's* Kingdom then, and the Character of him who sits upon the Throne of it, to be advanced there, is to descend; to acquire Dignity, is to grow in Humility; to be qualified for a Station near the Prince is to possess a meek and quiet Spirit; to be honourable in the Sight of God and Angels; to be fitted for the Society of just Men made perfect; to enjoy inward Composure—is to be poor in Spirit, for that is to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. When this is considered, it is Matter of Joy, that the Gospel Treasure is committed to *earthen Vessels*—to Men, whose Employments and whose Hopes are an habitual Exhortation to the Study and Practice of Humility; and besides,

* Matt. xx. 26, 27, 28.

whose own Minds will suggest many private and personal Reasons to the same Effect. — It is happy for the World, for the Church, and for the Parties themselves, that if Ministers will be proud, peevish or self-sufficient, it shall not be through Want of Arguments to the contrary, Arguments, in which conscious Frailty, without much Expence of Thought, will instruct them.

ANOTHER useful and important Ingredient, in the Character of a Gospel Minister, is furnished from the same Store, namely a humane, compassionate and patient Disposition. The best Teachers in any Art or Science are those who arrive at Excellency, through much Pain and Labour; a quick and penetrating Genius can hardly form any Notion of a slow Capacity, and with Difficulty accommodates himself to the Progress of such; whereas, one, who recollects that his own Dulness often tried the Patience and Temper of his Teacher, must be both in the Habit, and under the Inclination of shewing Lenity and Tenderneſs, towards those who learn of him.

A PHYSICIAN,

A PHYSICIAN, who has never known Pain and Sickness himself, wants at least one important Auxiliary to Skill, and one irresistible Recommendation to his Patient—One useful Quality, which Experience only can bestow upon him; it is an amiable View of the great Physician of Souls, in this Respect, with which the Apostle presents us: * “ In all Things it behoved him, “ to be made like unto his Brethren; that he “ might be a merciful and faithful High-priest, in “ Things pertaining to God, to make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People; for in that, “ he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is “ able to succour them that are tempted.” Again, † “ For we have not an High-priest who cannot “ be touched with the Feelings of our Infirmities; but was in all Points tempted like as “ we are, without Sin.”—Providence has for the same Reason wisely and graciously ordered it, that Priests and Ministers, taken from among Men, should have heart-felt Motives to pity the ignorant, the weak, the miserable; they are ‡ “ ordained for Men, in Things pertaining to

* Heb. ii. 17, 18. † Heb. iv. 15. ‡ Heb. v. 1, 2.

“ God, to have Compassion on the ignorant, and
 “ on them that are out of the Way, for that
 “ they themselves also are compassed with Infirmity.”

I HAVE reckoned this among the Advantages of a Minister's Situation; for though a feeling Heart be often a Source of the acutest Anguish, and of the most overwhelming Distress, which a selfish Mind is always studious to avoid, yet there is a Decency, there is a Dignity in it, which constitute the noblest Characteristick of Humanity; while it confers upon its Possessor the most laudable, and the most advantageous Ascendant towards the successful Discharge of his Duty; it bestows the justest Title to Confidence; it brings all a Minister's other Talents into the Way of their fullest and most promising Exertion; it leads by the shortest and the safest Road to extensive Utility. — The tender-hearted will bear me out, if I add, that, in the very Paroxysms of sympathetick Woe, there is a Joy which the selfish are not honoured to taste, with which the Stranger must not aspire to intermeddle: And this painful Sensibility, at worst, is more than compensated to the Man who lives not for himself merely, by the delightful Employment of it, in removing what
 gave

gave it Existence—the Misery of others. I now proceed

II. To consider, for what Reasons, in the Wisdom of God, the Gospel is dispensed by the Hands of frail and imperfect Men, as those Reasons affect the Persons *to* whom the Word of this Salvation is sent, or rather, as they affect their joint Interests and mutual Relations, for these are so blended as to render a Separation of them impossible.

THE Address of the Children of *Israel* to *Moses*, which we have read, affords one very obvious and striking Reason. A Dispensation coming immediately from God, was clothed in too many awful Circumstances, to admit of Recollection and Composure: Though the chosen Tribes had every Encouragement to believe that the glorious *Jehovah* was peculiarly propitious to them, and had promulgated his Law not in Anger, but in Kindness; yet they could not support the Enunciation of it from his own Lips. And had you, Christians, stood with them, trembling under the Terrours of *Mount*
C *Sinai*;

Sinai; had you heard the Thunderings, and seen the Lightenings; the Noise of the Trumpet resounding from Rock to Rock, the Mountain smoking and quaking, and the Voice of God himself bursting through the thick Cloud that veiled his Glory; you would, doubtless, have been disposed, with them, to remove and stand far off, and to join in their Request, “let not God speak with us, lest we die”—for † “so terrible was the Sight, that *Moses* himself said, I exceedingly fear and quake.” The Appearance of the Almighty unto *Elijah* in *Horeb*, recorded 1 *Kings* xix. 11, 12. is another instructive and striking Illustration to this Purpose, while at the same Time, it beautifully points out the Difference between the legal Dispensation and the evangelical; the terrifying Solemnity of the one, the Mildness and Gentleness of the other——“And behold the Lord passed by, and a great and strong Wind rent the Mountains, and brake in Pieces the Rocks before the Lord: But the Lord was not in the Wind.”—Else, how could a frail, sinful Mortal have supported his Presence? “And after the Wind an Earthquake; but the Lord was not in the Earthquake: And after the Earthquake a Fire; but the Lord was not

† Heb. xii. 21.

“ in the Fire :” The Glory of God, thus manifested, was too much for even an *Elijah* to bear : What then ? “ And after the Fire, a still small “ Voice :” This at length encouraged the Prophet to attend, and to approach towards the Entrance of the Cave, though not without wrapping his Face in his Mantle, that he might hear what God the Lord would say, in a Voice to which he could listen without Astonishment. — And it is thus, that our merciful heavenly Father deals with us in the Gospel of his Son ; he speaks to us in a still small Voice ? — the Words, the Accents are those of a Man to his Friend ; fearful, trembling Sinners are invited to the Throne of Grace, in Language which they understand, and which dissipates, not confirms their Apprehensions.

THE Ministration even of Angels, superiour, though created Intelligences, were unsuitable to the present weak, depressed State of Humanity ; for not to mention the Terrour inspired by the Appearances of those exalted Beings, under a Dispensation calculated to display, chiefly, the Majesty of the divine Power, Holiness and Justice ; we find that, under the gentler Reign of Grace and Mercy, the Presence of an Angel

was an Object of Fear, to the best of Men, as well as to the bold and guilty. * “ For Fear of
 “ him, who attended upon the Resurrection of
 “ the Lord *Jesus*, the Keepers did shake, and
 “ became as dead Men;” this is not much to be
 wondered at; but *Zacharias* himself, though employed in the most solemn religious Service, in Obedience to the express Appointment of God; though accustomed to make solitary Approaches to the most solemn and secret Recesses of the Temple, and free from the Horrors which an ill Conscience excites in the guilty Soul; yet
 † “ when he saw the Angel of the Lord standing on the right Side of the Altar of Incense,
 “ he was troubled, and Fear fell upon him.” At the Sight of him who announced the Nativity of our Lord, the Shepherds of *Bethlehem* were ‡ “ fore
 “ afraid.”

No Passion unhinges the Mind more than Fear; it distracts the Attention, misrepresents the Object, overwhelms the Understanding, and renders the Performance of a reasonable Service utterly impossible; it is therefore inconsistent with a Worship to be rendered in Spirit and in Truth, such as the Father of Spirits requires.

* Mat. xxviii. 4.

† Luke i. 11, 12.

‡ Luke ii. 9.

We are not then invited to it, and assisted in it, by Creatures whose Nature is superiour to our own — by sinless and perfect Beings; because their Devotion, however elevated and intense; their Zeal, however fervent; their Love, however pure; their Capacity, however enlarged; their Labours however executive and assiduous, could be no Examples of, no Incentives to ours. The Advantages which they possess in these very Respects, would prove the Means of damping, of discouraging, of intimidating us. It is the evident Design of the gracious Author of the Christian Dispensation to draw Men to himself † “with Cords of a Man, with Bands of Love,” and therefore *Men* are employed in this benevolent, this hope-inspiring Service.

As it is the gracious Intention of God, that his People should not be *terrified* in receiving the Proclamations of his Love, by the Dignity and the Distance of the Persons sent on this Errand; so, by choosing his Messengers from amongst the frail, the sinful and the miserable, he has wisely cut off all Occasion of their exacting an undue Respect, and forbidden the World, more than by an express Interdiction, to yield them Reverence on their own Account.

† Hof. xi. 4.

Nothing about them challenges Veneration, nothing is peculiarly estimable, except it be the Office which they bear, and the Message which they bring.

THERE is a well-known Propensity in Human Nature, to transfer the Attention due to an useful and important Piece of Intelligence, by an easy, and seemingly excusable Transition, to the Person of him who delivers it; at least to share the Respect between them: And it is as natural for those who are intrusted with any weighty and honourable Commission, to take State upon it, and to expect Submission and Regard on their separate Score; and these Propensities, acting upon and aiding each other, have filled even the Christian World with Idols and Idolaters. But it is also observable, that when an Attempt was made to deify a Christian Minister, a Claim of Infallibility was advanced in his Behalf; the earthen Pitcher was by a Kind of Magick transmuted into a Vase of Gold; for so long as it sensibly retained the base and contemptible Qualities of the former, it was impossible, with all the natural Bias of the human Heart towards Idolatry, to erect an Altar unto it. It is no less observable,

observable, however, in Opposition to this, that the nearer we approach to the pure Times of Christianity, and the higher that we mount on the Scale of apostolick and angelical Perfection, with the greater Firmness, and Abhorrence do we find all improper Respect disclaimed and rejected. * “ See thou do it not,” said the Angel to *John*, when he would have fallen down to worship before his Feet, upon being shewn the Glories of the *New Jerusalem*, “ for I am thy Fellow-Servant, and of thy Brethren the Prophets, and of them which keep the Sayings of this Book; worship God.” When *Paul*, and *Barnabas*, discovered in the Inhabitants of *Lystra*, an Intention to render them the Homage paid to Deity, in the Belief that they were superiour to Mortals, † “ they rent their Clothes, and ran in among the People, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do you these Things? we also are Men of like Passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these Vanities, unto the Living God”—and so restrained the People. When *Cornelius* met *Peter*, and fell down at his Feet and worshipped him, *Peter* took him up, saying, ‡ “ Stand up, I

* Rev. xxii. 9. † Acts xiv. 14, 15.

‡ Acts x. 25, 26.

“ myself

“ myself also am a Man.”—But what Occasion is there, it may be asked, for making these Remarks, in the present State of Things? These, surely, are not the Times, nor is this the Land of idolizing the Priesthood; of consecrating Altars to the Ministers of the despised *Galilean*; of implicit Faith and blind Attachment.—And can you indeed believe, Sirs, that it was never said except by the *Corinthians*, and Seventeen Hundred Years ago, * “ I am of *Paul*, and I of *Apollos*, “ and I of *Cephas*, and I of *Christ*.” Does the Bishop of *Rome* alone lay Claim to Supremacy and Infallibility? Or is Prelacy peculiar to the Church of *England*? Did there never exist in the Church but one † “ *Diotrephes*,” never but one, “ who loved to have the Pre-eminence?” Do Presbyterian Parity, and the levelling Hand of Independency always repress the lofty Pretensions of arrogant Individuals, and prevent the People from ‡ “ having Mens Persons in Admiration?”—Alas, my Friends! it is not a System that will check the Usurpations of Pride and Ambition: It is not a Form of Church Government that will settle the Dispute between the just Demands of a righteous God and the Pas-

* 1 Cor. i. 12. † 3 John 9. ‡ Jude 16.

sions and worldly Interests of Men; or between the opposite and discordant Claims of Men upon one another: There have been, there are, and there will be, till human Nature be thoroughly purged of its Dross, Men of all Persuasions ready to ask, and to yield what belongs to no Man whatsoever. When the People are intelligent, a Requisition of personal Regard, in whatever Manner advanced, is always sure to defeat itself, and to meet with deserved Contempt; and when it is otherwise, when Men will fall down to Gods of their own raising, it is wisely and well ordered, that the Idolatry should expose its own Folly and Absurdity. In this Process, Men act, as they often reason—in a Circle; designing, covetous and ambitious Priests worship and exalt the People; that the People, in their Turn, may elevate and support them; and both are equally repugnant to the Wisdom that is from above, which has committed this Treasure to earthen Vessels, that * “None may think of himself
 “more highly than he ought to think, but to
 “think soberly, according as God hath dealt to
 “every Man the Measure of Faith.”

* Rom. xii. 3.

THE Extreme, opposite to superstitious Homage and Veneration, is likewise guarded against, by this wise Establishment of the Christian Church—though the Ministers of it derive no Title to exercise Authority, or to demand Respect as Men, from their sacred Office, yet on the other Hand, that very Office ought to be a full Security against Insult and Disrespect. The Bearer of even an unwelcome Message ought not in Reason to be mal-treated; for the Offence, if there be any, comes not from him, but from his Employer—the brittle Phial which contains a precious Elixir must not be handled rudely, lest, in crushing it, the Medicine perish. This has an evident Respect both to Ministers and People; the former, in the Persuasion that they are appointed of Providence to convey the best of Tidings to Mankind, chearfully commit the Care of their Persons and of all their temporal Concerns to that Providence, and under it, to the Tenderness and Affection of those who partake of the spiritual Blessings which they dispense: The People again, in the Persons of their Ministers, have continually before their Eyes an Object whereon to exercise some of the worthiest Principles of their Nature—Gentleness, Sympathy,

pathy, Benevolence, Kindness. For what Picture, I beseech you, does a Minister of the Gospel present to the World? — he presents to us a Man loaded with all the Infirmities, and liable to all the Distresses incident to Humanity, with the additional Weight, peculiar to himself, of a momentous Charge, intrusted to him by God, in the certain Prospect of rendering a strict Account of it; constrained to stand daily at the Bar of any one who may be pleased to sit in Judgment upon him, and uncertain when he may be called to appear before the more tremendous Tribunal of the great Judge of all: A Man, who has voluntarily resigned the great, and the gainful Walks of Life, and the Means of whose very Subsistence, in many Instances, depend on the Good-Will of others: A Man, whose Profession has obstructed to him most of the usual Avenues leading to Fame and to Fortune, and whose Spirit should abhor every indirect Road to either: A Man, who has undertaken, not an easy and commodious Employment, but a Trust full of Care, of Anxiety, of Danger. — In such Circumstances, are not the Injunctions of Scripture, concerning the Treatment of the Christian Ministry, at the same Time also, the

Conclusions of Reason, the Dictates of Conscience, the Obligations of Gratitude, and the gentle Calls of Sensibility? * “ To know them
 “ which labour among you, and are over you in
 “ the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem
 “ them very highly in Love for their Works
 “ Sake.” If there be then any Virtue, if any
 Praise in employing and exerting the noblest and
 best Principles, of which the human Mind is
 susceptible, you have Reason to bless God, that
 he has furnished the Occasion, and spread the
 Field for such Exertion, by the Manner in which,
 and the Character and Situation of the Persons by
 whom the Gospel is dispensed. It remains, that
 we consider

III. THAT great and weighty Reason which is
 urged by the Apostle in the Text, why the
 all-wise God has thought fit to send his Gospel
 to the Children of Men, by the Hands of their
 frail and sinful Brethren, it is “ that the Excel-
 “ lency of the Power may be of God, and
 “ not of us.” — “ The *Excellency* of the Power;”
 its Superiority to every Thing human or created.
 The Effect, to be produced by Instruments so

* 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

weak,

weak, must be so great and astonishing, as to constrain the Beholder to transfer the Praise from the visible to the invisible Agent; from the feeble Creature to the omnipotent Creator, who has given such Power unto Men.

THE Apostle, in the preceding Part of this Chapter, had been considering * “the Knowledge of God” under the Idea of Light shining out of Darkness: This Light was displayed at first in meridian Brightness, in the Person of his Son, “in the Face of *Jesus Christ*.” — After, and under him, it was transmitted through a more obscure Medium, the Ministry of his Apostles; — but even then, its Rays were so quick and penetrating as fully to evince its divine Original, and to satisfy every impartial Observer, that it was indeed an Emanation from the pure Source of eternal and uncreated Light. In *Jesus*, the World † “beheld the Glory of the only begotten of the “Father, full of Grace and Truth,” native, underived Splendour; but *we* have this Treasure in earthen Vessels; the Glory is one, the Fountain of it one — its Effect constant and uniform — the End still one and the same; the Me-

* 2 Cor. v. 4, 6.

† Jo. i. 14.

dium of Transmission alone differs. In *Christ*, all Fulness was pleased to dwell; to him the Spirit was given without Measure; and from that inexhaustible Fulness, which is treasured up in him, do all his ministring Servants, whether Angels or Men, receive continual Supplies of Grace for Grace, according as they need, and he is pleased to communicate.

THE grand, combined System of Nature, of Providence and of Grace, is evidently hastening to one great Consummation, a general and full Manifestation of the Glory of the great Lord of all. Into this vast Ocean, the various and innumerable Instruments, employed by his sovereign Hand, are pressing forwards to empty their several little Urns: * “The Kings of the Earth,” to use the lofty Language of *Revelation*, “do bring their Glory and Honour into it, and the Nations of them that are saved shall walk in the Light of it;” that God may be all in all, that every Thing glorious and excellent in the Creature may be finally resolved into that, by which and for which the Universe was brought into Existence—the Glory of the Creator. Every

* Rev. xxi. 24.

Attempt to subvert this Order, or to frustrate this End, must be highly displeasing to that God who is jealous of his Honour, who will neither resign it, nor suffer it to be taken away from him; and who has accordingly so settled the Government, both of the natural and moral Worlds, as most effectually to prevent the ascribing to any other, what is due to him alone: And particularly, the Administration of God's Kingdom of Grace is so contrived as to render an Alienation, or a Partition of Praise, impracticable and absurd.

* " For after that, in the Wisdom of God, the
 " World by Wisdom knew not God, it pleased
 " God, by the Foolishness of Preaching, to save
 " them that believe." † " Because the Fool-
 " ishness of God is wiser than Men, and the
 " Weakness of God is stronger than Men;" to
 demonstrate which, " God hath chosen the foolish
 " Things of the World to confound the wise;
 " and God hath chosen the weak Things of the
 " World to confound the mighty; and base
 " Things of the World, and Things which are
 " despised, hath God chosen; yea, and Things
 " which are not, to bring to nought Things
 " that are, that no Flesh should glory in his Pre-

• 1 Cor. i. 21.

† 1 Cor. i. 25, &c.

" fence,

“ fence, but that he who glorieth should glory
“ in the Lord.”

WHEN we behold any wonderful and striking Effect, it is natural for us to investigate the Cause of it, and to compare them together; having discovered the apparent and proximate, and as we think an adequate Cause, we are too apt to stop short, to rest there, and to forget God. He is pleased therefore, in many Instances, to disturb us in our Processes and Conclusions of this Kind, and to confound and expose our shallow or presumptuous Reasonings, by exhibiting Effects, betwixt which and the apparent Causes, there is no Manner of Proportion, that he alone, * “ for whom are all Things, and by “ whom are all Things,” may be acknowledged and adored.

WHEN we read of One King, attended with an Hundred Thousand Men, going out to meet another King, who is advancing against him with an equal Number; when after a long and fierce Conflict, we behold Victory at length dropping into either Scale, we presently endeavour to

* Heb. ii. 10.

account for the Event, by considering and comparing the Skill or Misconduct of the Generals; the Bravery or Cowardice of the Soldiers; the Advantages or Disadvantages of the Ground, and such like Circumstances, which might have contributed towards the Victory or Defeat: But when we read of the Host of the *Midianites* and *Amalekites*, * “like Grasshoppers for Multitude,” discomfited by “the Three Hundred which “lapped,” and these armed only with Trumpets, Lamps, and empty Pitchers; and a whole Camp overturned, as by “a Cake of Barley Bread,” it is impossible to state a Comparison betwixt the Cause and the Effect, we are constrained to rise at once to the great first Cause of all Things, and to cry out, † “This cometh forth from the “Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in Counsel, “and excellent in working.” When I see the Walls of a great and strong City, though shaken by no Convulsion of the Earth, sunk by no Mine, shattered by no battering Ram, or other warlike Engine, yet falling down flat to the Ground; I cannot stop to think of ‡ “Seven “unwarlike Priests, with their Seven Trumpets “made of Rams Horns;”—but must imme-

* Judges vii. 12. † Isa. xxviii. 29. ‡ Josh. vi. 13.

diately revere the Arm of JEHOVAH, and ascribe the Success to the Appointment and Interposition of Heaven.

BUT the History of the Gospel exhibits Wonders still greater than these, and places the divine Perfections in a still more astonishing Point of View. Had the Saviour of the World chosen his Apostles from amongst the celebrated Philosophers and Orators of *Greece* and *Rome*, or commissioned the great, the mighty and the affluent of the Earth, to instruct their fellow Creatures in the Way of Salvation; the Sagacity, the Eloquence, and the Authority of the Preachers would certainly have become Objects of Attention; it might justly have been enquired, how far Men may be led to embrace a religious System through the Submission usually yielded to superior Rank, or the Charms of Oratory, or the Respect implicitly paid to apprehended Wisdom, independent of Knowledge and Conviction; whatever Effects might have been produced, through the Intervention of human Power and Genius, would, in Part at least, have been ascribed to their Exertion; and the Doctrine itself, conveyed through such Channels, must have received at most a divided Praise.

WHEN

WHEN we look back to the Infant State of Christianity, nothing indeed seems more improbable, according to the ordinary Rules of judging, than its Continuance in the World beyond the short and uncertain Lives of its first Professors. Full well was the Prediction of the Psalmist accomplished, in the early, obstinate and rancorous Opposition which was made to the Religion of the blessed *Jesus*, † “ The Kings
 “ of the Earth set themselves, and the Rulers
 “ take Counsel together against the Lord, and
 “ against his anointed.” The Improbability of Success was greatly increased by the internal Character and Spirit of the Gospel, and the Condition and Character of its first Ministers. The former contradicted and exposed the most favourite Maxims, disallowed and condemned the generally prevailing Practices of the World: The latter seemed calculated rather to hurt a popular Cause, than to recommend one that was odious and disgusting. To a Mind engrossed by the Wisdom, the Pleasures, the Riches, the Honours which the human Heart naturally affects and pursues; what could be more un-

† Psalm ii. 2.

gainly and forbidding, than the Aspect of a Doctrine which pointed out, which enjoined, which imposed the Cross, which professed to level every high Mountain of Pride, to dry up the very Fountain of carnal Joy, to lay the Axe to the Root of Ambition, and which proposed, to the covetous, Treasures in Heaven? And by what Instruments were Purposes of such hazardous and difficult Enterprize to be effected? by Men destitute of Authority, of Influence, of Ingenuity, of Address; by Men, whom their natural Abilities, their Country and Parentage, their Persons and Occupations, exposed to Contempt rather than to Hatred. An Infidel of those Days might have found plentiful Food for his Spleen and Ridicule, in the Contemplation of a Sect which was in Time to overspread the whole World; at the Head of which stood a little Handful of simple, unlettered Fishermen. But what is the Fact? The hated Doctrine, and the despised Ministers of a crucified *Jesus*, surmounted all Opposition, triumphed over the hostile Powers of Earth, and the Malice of Hell, and without the Assistance of Force, or Guile, or Gold, nay, against the united Strength of these, vigorously and zealously engaged on the
other

other Side, constrained Men to embrace the Cross, once the Object of their Aversion and Disdain. When therefore, we behold the great Author and Finisher of our Faith, employing at first, a feeble and scanty Band of simple Men, furnished with a few simple, and unostentatious though notorious Facts, for converting an ignorant, prejudiced, and Sin-enslaved World, to a Master, a Doctrine, a Conversation, which the World naturally despises and abhors; and by Means of such Messengers, armed with such Weapons, subverting Satan's Kingdom, supported by all the Learning, Passion, Power and temporal Interest of Man; and when to this Day, we see the same Difficulties overcome, the same Work prospering, the same Ends attained; and still through the Instrumentality of Men of moderate Parts, of feeble Eloquence, of little Authority, and for the most Part of very slender Fortune; Men of many personal, and of some professional Infirmities: When we observe all this, do we not hear, at the same Time, a Voice from the most excellent Glory, saying, "The Work is mine, the Praise be mine, and I will not give my Glory to another?" And can we but
 reply

reply in the Words of the heavenly Host, *
 “ Blessing and Honour, and Glory and Power
 “ be unto him who sitteth upon the Throne,
 “ and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

From this Subject,

I. CHRISTIAN *Ministers* are instructed in the Nature of that Rank and Station which they occupy in the Church of *Christ*, and the Obligations which arise out of these. It is surely of Importance, Men, Brethren and Fathers, that the Vessel which contains Gospel Blessings for the Benefit of others should itself be seasoned with Grace. It is an awful Thing for a Man to be the Publisher to another, of an Act of Indemnity which contains in it a positive and express Exception against himself—to preach the Doctrine of Reconciliation to others, and be himself a Cast-away. The distinct Knowledge of this Treasure, and the Application of it to our own Necessities, ought certainly to precede the Communication of it to our fellow Sinners, both for their Sakes and our own. Mankind at large will assume and exercise a Liberty of studying or neglecting Christianity, according to their Plea-

* Rev. v. 13.

sure,

sure, and they must abide by the Consequences, but the very Name of Minister supposes the Choice to be already made, and that Necessity is laid upon him who bears it, to study, know, love and practise the Truth as it is in *Jesus*.

HE whose Office it is to go between opposite and contending, but reconcileable Parties, ought to be acquainted with the Mind, the Condition, and the Dispositions of both. A Message not fully understood never can be faithfully delivered. A Minister must deliver what he has received of the Lord, not what his own Inclination, or the Taste of his Hearers may relish or approve. A Trust reposed must, in order to prove a Man faithful, be surrendered without Increase or Diminution. To conceal any Part of the Counsel of God is to be unjust to the People, who have a Heaven-derived Claim to the Whole; to pretend to add any Thing, is to be highly presumptuous against God, who is the only competent Judge of what is enough: But this by no Means precludes the Exercise of Prudence, of Delicacy, of Boldness, according as various Circumstances may require. Now that Calls to the Ministry are not miraculous, but providential,

providential, our Talents, as Men, are to be carefully cultivated, and strenuously exercised. If we would be faithful to God, and useful to Men, we must add, to an entire Reliance upon Almighty Grace, the full Exertion of all those Powers, natural and acquired; which the great Dispenser of every good and perfect Gift has bestowed upon us.

THE Idea of the Text suggests to Ministers their intrinsic Weakness and Worthlessness, but, at the same Time, their Utility and Importance, as Instruments in the Hand of God for carrying on his Work. This Distinction, properly understood and felt, is the only Preservative from Pride and Self-Conceit on the one Hand, and a listless, indolent Affectation of Humility on the other. The Idea of the Text suggests to Ministers their Fragility—their Mortality. † “Our Fathers, where are they? “the Prophets, do they live for ever?” Ah no! yet a little while, and ‡ “the Silver Cord shall “be loosed, and the Golden Bowl broken, and “the Pitcher broken at the Fountain, and the “Wheel at the Cistern.” A Consideration how affecting! a Motive how urgent to do the Work of the Day while the Day lasts! Did we con-

† Zech. i. 5.

‡ Eccles. xii. 6.

sider our Sermons as the Addresses of dying Men, to dying Men, surely they would often, in many important Respects, differ from their present Tenour. May God give us a deeper Sense of the Worth of precious Souls, and make us to feel, in all their Weight and Importance, the Powers of a World to come.

II. THE *Hearers* of the Gospel are, by this Subject, instructed in sundry interesting and important Particulars of their Duty and Situation in the Church of *Christ*. They are taught Gratitude to the Grace and Condescension of God, who, in making known to them the Counsels of his Will, has been pleased to lay aside the Thunder of his Power, has suppressed the awful Voice which makes Earth shake to her Center, and Hell to tremble in the Agonies of Despair, and has sunk the Sovereign and the Judge, in the Father and the Friend. And should that Message be less welcome, which encourages Hope, which invites to Peace, which sooths the Soul to Rest — not confounds the Understanding, not drinks up the Spirit; which extinguishes the Hell within the Breast, and brings the Means of Escape from the Hell beyond the Grave?

F

Because

Because God is gentle and condescending, should Men be trifling and negligent? Of all Punishments, that of despised Mercy, of slighted Grace, is surely the justest, and will be the most severe.

If you feel this, Christians, you are already informed how to conduct yourselves towards your Ministers; you are already guarded against putting them in the place of God on the one Hand, or setting them “with the Dogs of your “Flock” on the other.—You have already learned to revere their Office, to listen to their Message, to love their Persons, for their Work’s Sake, to consider their outward Circumstances, to imitate their Virtues, to commiserate their Infirmities, to be merciful to their Faults. In behalf of their Vices, I have Nothing to urge; would to God they had none to need Indulgence—but in behalf of their many Failings and Infirmities, I would venture to plead, were this the proper Time and Place. Ministers are indeed, in all Respects, their Ministry alone excepted, so very like yourselves, that you have only your own Hearts and Consciences to consult, in order to make a proper Estimate of them, to
determine

determine your Opinion of their Conduct, and to regulate your Behaviour towards them.

To conclude, both *Ministers* and *People* are hereby taught to acknowledge God chiefly, God only, in all Things; to refer all the Good they do, or receive, to the great Parent of Good; to cease from Man, from each other, from themselves; to rejoice in the Establishment of the divine Glory, upon the Ruins of human Pride. This View, my Friends, absorbs the Spirit of Party, annihilates Contention, brings Heaven down to Earth, and places Men among Angels. By entering seriously and heartily into it, we shall feel Pride languish and die, Zeal burn with a more pure and placid Flame, Love to God and Men wax stronger and stronger, the World and its lying Vanities disappear — the *New Jerusalem* in all its Glory unveil itself. Let thy Will be done, O heavenly Father, by Men on Earth, as by the Angels in Heaven, “ fulfil in us the
“ whole good Pleasure of thy Goodness, and the
“ Work of Faith with Power, that the Name of
“ our Lord *Jesus Christ* may be glorified in us,
“ and we in him.” *Amen. Amen.*

THE
SUBSTANCE
OF THE
CHARGE
TO

The Rev. MR. NICOLSON.

DEAR SIR,

AS by God's gracious Permission, and I hope agreeably to his Appointment, you are now ordained and set apart to the holy Ministry, you'll give me Leave, in pursuance of that Part of the Duty which has been assigned to me on this Occasion, to address you in the Words of the Apostle to *Timothy*, * " I give thee Charge in the Sight of God, who quickeneth all Things, and of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, who before *Pontius Pilate* witnessed a good Confession, that thou keep this Commandment without Spot, unblameable, and

* 1 Epist. ch. vi. ver. 13, 14.

" unrebuke-

“unrebukeable, till the appearing of *Jesus Christ*.”

THESE Words, Sir, contain, methinks, every Thing which it is necessary for you to know, and practise, in order to constitute you a faithful Minister of *Jesus Christ*; for in the First Place you have here the Sum of your Duty expressed in these Terms, “this Commandment;” Secondly, the Manner in which you are to perform it, and that is, you are to “to keep it;” Thirdly, the Degree of Care with which you are to keep it, and that is delivered in these Words, “without Spot, unblameable, and unrebukeable;” Fourthly, the Period to which you are thus to keep it, viz. “till the appearing of *Jesus Christ*;” Fifthly, the Reasons why you are thus to keep it, and these are exhibited in those Words, “I give thee Charge in the Sight of “God, who quickeneth all Things, and of *Jesus Christ*, who before *Pontius Pilate* witnessed a “good Confession:” A few Thoughts, therefore, upon each of these shall, God willing, make up what I have to offer to you upon this Occasion.

WITH

WITH respect to the First of these, the Sum of your Duty contained in these Words, " this Commandment ; " I presume it is needless to observe to you that this Expression denotes here, as in many other Passages of Scripture, the Whole of the Religion of the blessed *Jesus*, which may be reduced, for the Sake of Order and Want of Time, to two general Heads ; First, the Commandment of Faith, Secondly, the Commandment of Practice. As to the former of these, there are too many, who either from Ignorance, or a bad Heart, depreciate Faith as a mere mechanical Thing, asserting that the Mind is wholly passive in the Admission of it, because we are forced to believe or disbelieve according to Evidence set before us ; therefore, as it is not a Matter of Choice, it cannot be a Matter of Virtue. All this may be very true with respect to a mere abstract and speculative Faith, but the Christian Faith is of a different Nature, for it includes and requires the Consent of the Will as well as the Assent of the Understanding to the Truths of the Gospel ; but now, all must allow that the Consent of the Will is a proper Object of a Command : Therefore the Apostle *John*, in his First Epistle, ch. iii. ver 29 calls Faith by the express Name of a
Com-

Commandment: "This," says he, "is his (God's) Commandment, that ye believe in the Name of his Son *Jesus Christ*," that is, that you not only abstractly believe in him as the Saviour of the World, but also acquiesce in, rely upon, and appropriate him to yourselves as your Saviour. The same Command the Apostles of our Lord gave to the penitent Jailor, * when he asked what he should do to be saved; "Believe," say they, "in the Name of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and thou shalt be saved." And to the same Purpose our blessed Lord himself commands his Disciples and Followers to believe in him, † "Let not your Hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me."

AND indeed it is no Wonder that so much Stress is laid in Scripture upon Faith, for taken in its full Latitude, it is the Foundation of all Religion, natural and revealed; for how is it possible we can worship God, unless we believe there is a God? how is it possible we can accept of a gracious Saviour unless we believe there is such a Saviour? how is it possible we can invoke the Influences of God's blessed Spirit, to enlighten

* Acts xvi. 31.

† John xiv. 1.

our Minds, renew our Wills, purify our Affections, refine our Imaginations, and reform our Lives, with many other kind Offices to us which I cannot now enumerate, unless we believe there is such a blessed Spirit; and how is it possible we can pay any Obedience to God's Laws, unless we believe the perfect Rectitude and eternal Obligation of them? in a Word, how can we prepare for Heaven and immortal Glory, unless we believe there is such a State? The same may be said of all the Counsels, Exhortations, Invitations, Threatenings and Promises of the Gospel; Faith it is which gives them all their Force and Efficacy; for if we do not believe them, they will make no Impression upon us: Therefore the Apostle † says, "Without Faith it is impossible
 " to please God; for he that cometh unto God
 " must believe that he is, and that he is the
 " Rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
 The same rational Doctrine is taught by the Apostles *Paul* and *James*; by the former in that sensible Question, ‡ "How shall they call on
 " him, in whom they have not believed?" and by the latter, § "If any of you lack Wisdom,
 " let him ask of God, who giveth unto all Men

† Heb. xi. 6.

‡ Rom. x. 14.

§ James i. 5, 6, 7, 8.

“ liberally, and upbraideth not ; but let him ask
 “ in Faith, nothing wavering ; for he that
 “ wavereth is like a Wave of the Sea, tossed
 “ to and fro of the Wind ; but let not that
 “ Man think he shall receive any Thing of the
 “ Lord : A double-minded Man is unstable in
 “ all his Ways.” This Faith therefore, Sir,
 you are, by Divine Assistance, to cherish and
 promote in your own Soul, and in the Souls of
 your Hearers.

SECONDLY, This Expression denotes a Com-
 mandment of Practice, and that not only with
 Relation to the peculiar Duties of your Office as
 a Christian Minister, but also those of a Christian
 Man : And these indeed are inseparably con-
 nected with, and flow from the former Com-
 mandment ; for wherever true Faith is, there
 will be a good Heart and Life : Upon this Con-
 nection the Apostles of our Lord inform us the
 glorious Plan and Constitution of his Religion is
 formed ; * “ The Grace of God, which bringeth
 “ Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men, teach-
 “ ing Us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly
 “ Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and

* Titus ii. 11, 12, 13, 14.

“ godly

“ godly in this present evil World ; looking for
 “ the blessed Hope, and the glorious Appear-
 “ ance of the great God and our Saviour, who
 “ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us
 “ from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a
 “ peculiar People, zealous of good Works :”
 And I mention this the rather, because I am
 apprehensive, that too many (I hope from an
 involuntary Mistake) do, under a Pretence of
 exalting *Christ* and Faith in his Merits, greatly
 disparage, if not totally cancel the Necessity of
 Holiness. This is perhaps the most pernicious
 Heresy that was ever introduced into the Christian
 Church ; for this at once and most directly de-
 stroys and defeats the Design of the Gospel,
 which is, by the fittest Means, to restore us to
 to the primitive Purity and Rectitude of our
 Nature, and thus render us capable of eternal
 Felicity : For, says the Apostle, * “ We are
 “ chosen to Salvation, through Sanctification of
 “ the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth.”

PERMIT me, therefore, dear Brother, to ex-
 hort you to love God above all Things, to
 esteem, honour, and adore him above all Things,

* 2 Theff. ii. 13.

to obey, submit to, and rejoice in him above all Things. " This," says our blessed Lord, " is the First and great Commandment, and the Second is like unto it, " Thou shalt love thy Neighbour " as thyself." You must not therefore, under the Pretence of the Duties of Piety, neglect or violate those of a social and moral Kind; you must not lie for God's Sake, as too many in a certain Church do—must not fine, imprison, oppress and kill, as our Saviour expresses it, under the Pretext of supporting his Cause and doing him Service. No, you must be kind, humane, charitable to all. The Apostle *John* represents the Union between the Love of God and that of our Fellow-Creatures as so indissoluble, that he tells us, in Severity of Language, very uncommon to him, " That if a Man say, he loves God, " and hates his Brother, he is a Liar; for he that " loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, " how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Purity of Morals is so essential to the Religion of *Christ*, that they who disparage them, either by Word or Deed, are justly thought to be none of his Disciples. I remember a well authenticated Fact of an eminent Physician at *Oxford*, about the Time of the Reformation, when the Bible

was

was very little used by the Generality, going one Day into his Closet, he took up a New Testament, and read to himself what is called our Lord's Sermon upon the Mount: After he had done, he threw down the Book upon the Table, and said, "either this is not the Gospel of *Christ*, "or we are not Christians." Give me leave, therefore, Sir, to exhort you in the Words of the Apostle, † "Whatsoever Things are true, " whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things " are honest, whatsoever Things are lovely, " whatsoever Things are of good Report, if " there be any Virtue, any Praise, think upon " these Things." The Grace of the Gospel is so far from superseding the Obligations of Holiness, that it binds them upon us by a double Tye. The Apostles of our blessed Master always speak against those with a peculiar Pathos, who separate the one from the other. ‡ "What shall " we say then, shall we continue in Sin that " Grace may abound? God forbid; for how " shall we who are dead to Sin live any longer " therein? Know ye not that so many of us as " were baptized into *Christ* were baptized into " his Death? that like as *Christ* was raised from

† Philipp. iv. 8.

‡ Rom. vi. 1, 2, 3, 4.

" the

“ the Dead, by the Glory of the Father, even so
 “ we also should walk in Newness of Life.” I
 own that I always suspect some of those of Hy-
 pocrisy, or at least of very great Ignorance, who
 are ever and anon talking of Grace in the warmest
 Accents, but of Holiness seldom, and in cold
 ones indeed. This is not preaching *Cbrist*, but
 preaching against him. Allow me, therefore, to
 give the same Charge to you that *Paul* gave to
Titus, † “ This is a faithful Saying, and these
 “ Things I will that thou affirm constantly, that
 “ they who have believed in God be careful to
 “ maintain good Works ; these Things are good
 “ and profitable unto Men.”

I PROCEED, now to the Second Thing in the Me-
 thod, and that is the Manner in which you are to
 perform this Duty, expressed in these Terms,
 “ Keep it,” which denotes, in the First Place, that
 you are to retain, guard and defend it : It is too
 precious a Treasure to be ever given up upon
 any Consideration whatsoever. Part therefore
 with no Doctrine, no Precept, no Promise of it.
 No, you must carry it through Life with you,
 through Death, and through Eternity with you.

† Titus iii. 8.

And

And indeed, it is the only Thing which can follow you thither; for Friends, Fortune, Places, Honours must all be left on this Side the Grave. Say therefore with holy *Job*, * “ My Righteousness I hold fast, I will never let it go; my Heart shall not reproach me so long as I live;” that when you come to draw your last Breath, you may have Ground to say with the Apostle, † “ I am now ready to be offered, the Time of my Departure is at Hand; I have fought the good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which God the righteous Judge will give unto me at that Day.”

THEREFORE, in the Second Place, keep and guard it in Opposition to the Corruptions of your own Heart, for none are free from these — in Opposition to the Temptations of the World, for none are exempt from these — in Opposition to the evil Examples of it, for all are surrounded with these. The best Preservative against all of these is to be constantly upon your Watch, to be mortifying Sin daily, improving in Faith and

* Job xxvii. 6.

† 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

Holiness,

Holiness, and living in the continued Exercise of Prayer, that God would be pleased to keep you by his Power, and direct your Paths. Take therefore the Advice of the Apostle, * “ But ye
 “ beloved, seeing ye know these Things before,
 “ beware, lest being led astray by the Error of
 “ the Wicked, ye should fall from your own
 “ Stedfastness; but grow in Grace, and in the
 “ Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus*
 “ *Christ*.”

BUT Thirdly, This Expression plainly implies, that you are to support and defend it against the Attacks that are made upon it by others. It is not impossible but that you may meet with some who will endeavour to smile you out of your Religion, others who may attempt to frown you out of it, and perhaps some who may employ their Power to threaten you out of it; for all these Engines have been made use of to destroy *Christ*'s Interest in this World, and sometimes proved too successful; but you must answer all such in the Words, and with the Spirit of *Elihu*, † “ I will
 “ show you, that I have yet to speak on God's
 “ Behalf; I will fetch my Knowledge from afar,
 “ and I will ascribe Righteousness to my Maker;”

* Pet. iii. 17, 18.

† Job xxxvi. 2, 3.

and through divine Aid, nothing shall ever move you from the Hope of the Gospel; and if in the wise and good Providence of God you are brought to Sufferings on that Account, pray that he would enable you to say with *Paul* in the like Circumstances, * “ According to my earnest Expectation and Hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all Boldness, as always, so now also *Christ* shall be magnified in my Body, whether it be by Life, or whether it be by Death:” And again, when he was taking his Leave of the Elders of *Ephesus*, † “ And now, Brethren, I go bound in the Spirit to *Jerusalem*, not knowing what shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth that, in every City, Bonds and Imprisonments abide me: But none of these Things move me, neither count I my Life dear unto myself, if so be I may finish my Course with Joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God.” *Seneca* tells us that there is not upon Earth a more agreeable Spectacle to the Deity, than a good Man struggling with Calamities, and Persecutions, and yet still retaining his Integrity;

* Philipp. i. 20.

† Acts xx. 22, 23, 24.

and *Christ* himself tells us the same Thing in still better Words, by the Mouth of the Apostle *John*, “Be thou faithful unto the Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.” This leads to the

THIRD Thing in the Method, and that is the Degree of Care and Exactness with which you are to keep it, viz. “without Spot, unblameable, and unrebukeable:” Probably while I am pronouncing these Words, you are saying in your own Mind, “Alas! the Charge is too high, “I cannot attain to it:” That may be very true; but still it is your Duty and mine to aspire after it, though we may never be so happy in this World as to reach the same. God does not lose his Right to command, because we have lost our Power to obey, for that is our Fault instead of being our Excuse: But it is our Comfort (such is his Grace) that he accepts us, if sincere, through the glorious Mediator, “according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not.” Follow therefore the Example of that eminent Apostle — who tells us, that though he had not already attained, nor was as yet perfect, yet he followed after, if that he might apprehend

apprehend that for which also he was apprehended of *Christ Jesus*: Like him, forget the Things that are behind, and, reaching to those which are before, press towards the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling. Labour therefore, Sir, to be harmless, and blameless as a Son of God without Rebuke, in the Midst of a crooked and perverse Generation, among whom you may shine as a Light in the World, holding forth the Word of Truth, both by Precept and Example, that you may never run in vain. In Worship be solemn, in Prayer devout and humble, in Praises sincere and fervent, in Preaching plain, instructive and practical, in the Scriptures mighty, in human Literature studious, as much as your Time will allow. Those who are Enemies to this, and decry it in the Ministry as not of Importance, are so far Enemies (I hope through Inadvertency) to God himself; for he is the Original of all true Knowledge, natural, civil and religious; he is the Father of Lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect Gift, with whom there is no Variableness nor Shadow of turning: However insignificant it may be without Grace and a good Heart, yet with these it has been, and may be of great Service to the Interests of true Re-

ligion and Virtue. Therefore the Author of my Text, who was a very learned Man himself, exhorts *Timothy* to give Attendance to Reading—to meditate upon these Things—to give himself wholly to them, for in so doing, that is, in thus qualifying himself for his weighty Charge, he would take the best human Means both to save himself and them that heard him.

FINALLY, Upon this Point, let Piety, Sobriety, Humility and Regularity breathe through the Whole of your outward Deportment. I need not tell you that Example, though a silent, is a powerful Instructor. There is something so amiable and engaging in a good Life, that even the Profligate, though he may affect to ridicule it with his Mouth, cannot help approving and esteeming it in his Heart: He may choose the Libertine for his Companion, but prefers the honest Man to be his Trustee. Perhaps some Ministers have preached more successfully by their Example than they ever did by their Sermons. Eloquence, which I do not mean to disparage, for it is the Boon of Heaven, often evaporates into Air, but a good Example is a standing Monitor. Words and Sentences are
 forgot,

forgot, but Facts remain. Let your Light therefore, Sir, so shine before Men, that they, seeing your good Works, may glorify your Father who is in Heaven. I do not mean that a Minister of the Gospel is to be scrupulous, except in those Things which are beyond the Bounds of Innocence, or to be sour, fullen, reserved, peevish, morose and precise, for this is a Disgrace to his Character, and prejudices Men against real Religion, of which this is only a counterfeit Semblance; no, he is to enjoy, with Thankfulness, all the Comforts and lawful Pleasures which an indulgent Providence is pleased to put in his Power, only let him take care not to transgress the Line. Perhaps we may have observed, that some who have been shamefully lax in Matters of the last Moment, or as our blessed Saviour most elegantly and sententiously expresses it, "strain at a Gnat and swallow a Camel;" Men who would not break a Canon of their Church, though perhaps absurd in itself, but greedily indulge Spleen, Rancour and Malice against their Fellow Creatures, who differ from them, and yet may be much better than themselves: However that be, let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth, but that which is

good

good to the Use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers; and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby, I hope, you are sealed to the Day of Redemption. Be an Ensample to the Flock, that, when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you may receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away. This leads me to the

FOURTH Thing in the Method, the Period or Length of Time you are thus to keep this Commandment, and that is here said to be, "until the appearing of *Jesus Christ*;" perhaps not till *Jesus Christ* appear in this World at the last and general Judgment; for that, for any Thing we know, may still be at a very great Distance; but one Thing is certain, and that is, you must keep it till you appear before *Jesus Christ*; and that, comparatively speaking, though you are but young, may be very soon. I think I know you better than even to suspect you will take this Observation amiss; for what is our Life, it is even as a Vapour which appeareth for a little Season, and then vanisheth away. We are strong To-day and weak To-morrow, healthy To-day but sick To-morrow, at Ease To-day but in Pain To-morrow, alive To-day but dead To-morrow; So true

is

is it what the holy Psalmist says; "Lo, thou
 " hast made my Days as a Hand-breadth, mine
 " Age is as nothing before thee; surely every
 " Man at his best Estate is altogether Vanity."

But if you should hold out to the utmost general
 Period of human Life, which by the Favour of
 Providence you seem, according to what is called
 the common Course of Things, to bid fair for,
 yet you know it is but a very short Space of
 Time: * "Threescore and Ten Years do fill up
 " our Days, or if by Reason of Strength in some
 " they be Fourscore, yet doth the Strength of
 " such old Men prove but Labour and Sorrow;
 " for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

I SAY not these Things to damp and discourage
 you, but to excite and animate you to the greater
 Diligence and Faithfulness. That may justly be
 esteemed a long Life in which much Good is
 done, however few its Years, and that reckoned
 a short one in which no Good, or something worse
 is done, however many its Days. Your Case,
 as perhaps it has been the Case of many worthy
 Ministers, may be that of the Apostle Paul,
 " You may in some Parts of your Life be in
 " a Strait betwixt two, having a Desire to de-
 " part,

* Psalm xc. 10.

“ part, and to be with *Christ*, which is far better;
 “ nevertheless to abide in the Body may be
 “ more profitable for your Flock.” Submit
 therefore to God’s Will in this Matter, and take
 the Advice of our blessed Lord, “ Work while
 “ it is Day with you; for the Night cometh
 “ wherein no Man can work.” And if it shall
 please God, that your publick Labours should,
 through Infirmities, come to an End before your
 Life, yet still, through divine Grace, be working
 out your own Salvation, and doing all the private
 Good you can: For we must not only live Be-
 lievers in *Christ*, but die Believers in him; must
 not only live Lovers of God, but die Lovers of
 him; must not only live just and honest Men,
 but die just and honest Men; must not only live
 in Charity with all Men, but die in Charity with
 all Men. Let your Path therefore, Sir, be that
 of the Just, which shineth more and more until
 the perfect Day. Pray that he who, I hope, hath
 begun the good Work in you, would be pleased
 to perform it till the Day of *Jesus Christ*.

I now proceed to the last Thing proposed, and
 that is, the Reasons why you are to keep this Com-
 mandment, and these are Three; First, because
 the

the Charge is given you, and must be executed in the Sight of God; of God, who knows every Thing we say, every Thing we do; who is with you wherever you are, with you wherever you go, with you when at home, with you when abroad, with you when alone, with you when in Company, with you when sleeping, with you when waking, with you when living, with you when dying. As it is written, * “ Whither shall
 “ we go from his Spirit? or flee from his Presence? if we could ascend to Heaven, he is
 “ there; if we should make our Bed in Hell,
 “ behold he is there; if we take the Wings of
 “ the Morning and fly to the uttermost Parts
 “ of the Earth, there would his Hand lead us,
 “ and his Right-Hand would hold us; if we say,
 “ surely the Darkness shall cover us, even the
 “ Night shall be light about us: For the Dark-
 “ ness hideth not from him, but the Night
 “ shineth as the Day, the Darkness and the Light
 “ are both alike to him.” Neither is there any Creature that is not manifest in his Sight, but all Things are naked and open to the Eyes of him with whom we have to do. Is not this therefore, think you, a powerful Reason for keeping this

* Psalm cxxxix. 7, &c.

Commandment, and for acting a Part worthy of so solemn and august a Witness? Wherefore, whatever you are doing, let this Thought always dwell upon your Mind; "Thou, God, seest me."

BUT again, another Reason for your doing so, is, "that God quickeneth all Things," Angels, Men, the Beasts of the Field, the Fishes of the Sea, the Fowls of the Air, every Animal derive their Being and Life from him. The Eyes by which we see, the Ears by which we hear, the Tongues by which we speak, the Feet by which we walk, the Hands by which we handle, the Nostrils by which we smell, were all formed by, and received their Powers from him: Our Understandings by which we discover Truth and Duty, our Wills by which we choose them, our Affections by which we love them, and the Memories by which we retain them, come all from him. By his Power, and for his Pleasure we are and were created. Further, God not only quickens all Things originally, but likewise supports and maintains them through the whole Progress of their Existence. The Food we eat, the Raiment we put on, the Showers by which the Earth is watered, the Sun by which it is cherished,

cherished, the Habitations we dwell in, the Air we breathe, the Fire by which we are warmed, and the Health we enjoy, are all his Gift. † “ O Lord, thou preservest Man and Beast.” Is it not therefore most just and reasonable, that as we receive all our Faculties both of Soul and Body from God, that they should be employed in his Service, and to his Glory? Remember *Paul's* Words, “ God whose I am, and whom I am bound to serve.”

SECONDLY, upon this Point, God is not only the Author of your *natural* but also of your *spiritual* Life. For he it is who by his Word and blessed Spirit enlightens our Minds, subdues our stubborn Wills, purifies our corrupt Affections, refines our polluted Imaginations, and reforms our sinful Lives. ‡ “ You,” says the Apostle, “ hath he quickened who were dead in Trespases and Sins, wherein in Time past ye walked according to the Course of this World, according to the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience; among whom also we all had our Conversation in Times past, in

† Psalm xxxvi. 6.

‡ Ephes. ii. 1, 2, &c.

“ the Lusts of the Flesh, fulfilling the Desires
 “ of the Flesh and of the Mind; and were by
 “ Nature the Children of Wrath, even as others;
 “ But God, who is rich in Mercy, for the great
 “ Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were
 “ dead in Trespasses and Sins, hath quickened
 “ us together with *Christ*, by Grace are ye saved,
 “ and hath raised us up together, and made us
 “ sit together in heavenly Places in *Christ Jesus*.”

Nor is this all, for he not only gives this spiritual Life at first, but revives it when it grows languid through the Prevalence of Corruption, the Influence of Temptation, too close an Attention to secular Concerns, and the Contagion of evil Examples. So the holy Psalmist prays, † “ Cast me not away from thy Presence; take
 “ not thy Holy Spirit from me; restore unto me
 “ the Joys of thy Salvation, and uphold me
 “ with thy free Spirit:” And to the same Purpose betakes himself to the Almighty in the like Circumstances, saying, ‡ “ My Soul cleaveth to
 “ the Dust; quicken thou me according to thy
 “ Word.” As, therefore, we receive this spiritual Life from God, it is certainly both our Duty and Interest to lay it out to his Honour and the

† Psalm li. 11, 12.

‡ Psalm cxix. 25.

Good of immortal Souls, especially if we have any peculiar Talents that way. Permit me then to put you in Mind of the Words of St. *Paul*, with Respect to this Point; “ By the Grace of “ God,” says he, “ I am what I am; and his “ Grace which was bestowed on me was not in “ vain; but I laboured more abundantly than “ they all, yet not I, but the Grace of God “ which was with me.”

ONCE more upon this Argument, God is the Author of our *eternal* Life; “ for the Gift of God is eternal Life, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord.” In pursuance of this gracious Design he has been pleased to promise that he will quicken our Bodies again at the last Day, re-unite them to our Souls, and make both completely happy for ever; for then we shall be eternally delivered from the very Seeds and Principles of every Corruption, of every Pain, every Cross, every Loss, every Kind of Death: Not only so, but every Faculty of the Mind, and every Grace and Virtue of the Heart, shall then be perfected as much as human Nature will admit; nor is this all neither, for they shall then be advanced to the best of all Company, God the Father,
Son,

Son, and Holy Ghost, and an innumerable Company of Angels, to the best of all Employments, and the best of all Enjoyments, admiring, which is the most agreeable of all Passions in the Breast of Men, the Perfections of God displayed in his Works, his Providence and his Grace: They shall sing the Song of *Moses*, the Man of God, and the Song of the Lamb, saying, “ Great and
 “ marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Al-
 “ mighty, just and true are thy Ways, O thou
 “ King of Saints; who would not fear thee, and
 “ glorify thy Name, for thou only art holy!” To these, perhaps, we should add some extraordinary Acts of Blessing, which God may be pleased to bestow by his own immediate Hand; for who can tell what a God of boundless Power and Goodness can, and may be disposed to do for all that love him. Keep in Memory, therefore, that Declaration of the Apostle, † “ If the Spirit
 “ of him that raised up *Christ* from the Dead
 “ dwell in you, he that raised up *Christ* from
 “ the Dead shall also quicken your mortal Body,
 “ by his Spirit that dwelleth in you;” and that also of our blessed Lord, from whom he borrowed it, ‡ “ The Hour cometh, in the which all

† Rom. viii. 11.

‡ John v. 28, 29.

“ that

“ that are in their Graves shall hear his Voice;
 “ and shall come forth; they that have done
 “ Good to the Resurrection of Life, but they
 “ that have done Evil to the Resurrection of
 “ Condemnation.” Should not this be a cogent
 Reason with you to keep this Commandment?
 Give me leave, therefore, to recommend to you
 the Exhortation of the Apostle *Jude*, † “ But
 “ you beloved, building yourself up in your most
 “ holy Faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost,
 “ keep yourself in the Love of God, looking
 “ for the Mercy of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, unto
 “ eternal Life.” In this Way, and this Way
 alone, you will give up your Accounts with Joy,
 and not with Grief. This carries me to the

THIRD and last Reason for keeping this Com-
 mandment, and that is, because the Charge to
 do so, is given you in the Sight of our Lord
Jesus Christ, who before *Pontius Pilate* witnessed
 a good Confession; that is, acknowledged him-
 self to be the Messiah or the Saviour of the
 World; that blessed Person therefore, who, in
 order to atone for our Sins, vouchsafed to leave
 the Glories of the heavenly State, to be insulted,

† Jude 20, 21.

buffetted,

buffetted, spit upon, apprehended as a Malefactor, arraigned, tried, condemned, crucified and buried; that blessed Person, who suffered the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to Death in the Flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; in a Word, he who gave himself for us an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling Savour; who humbled himself that we might be exalted, bore our Sins that we might be pardoned, was condemned that we might be justified, and died that we might live. Can we ever do or suffer too much to promote the Cause and Interest of this gracious Lover of Souls? No, the Love of *Christ* should constrain us, because * “we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again.” Think, therefore, no Pains, no Labour too much in his Service; no Reproach, no Persecution too great to be undergone for his Sake, and the Salvation of immortal Souls. Meditate on the Words of *Peter*, † “If ye be reproached for the Name of *Christ*, “happy are you; for the Spirit of Glory and of

* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

† 1 Peter iv. 14.

“ God resteth upon you ; on their Part he is evil
 “ spoken of, but on your Part he is glorified.”
 Think it not strange concerning the fiery Trial
 which is to try you, as though some strange Thing
 happened to you, but rejoice rather that you
 are made Partaker of *Christ*’s Sufferings, that,
 when his Glory shall be revealed, you may be
 glad also with exceeding great Joy. Then,
 though *Israel* should not be gathered, which
 may be the Case, for a Minister’s Success is not
 always answerable to his Labours, Wishes and
 Prayers, yet you shall be glorious in his Sight,
 and your Reward shall be with your God.

Thus, Sir, I have finished the several Heads
 of this Charge as laid down in the Method,
 and shall now conclude with one Exhortation
 to you, and my best Wishes for you. My Ex-
 hortation is that of *Paul* to *Timothy*, in the fol-
 lowing Words : “ That good Thing, which is
 “ committed to thy Trust, keep by the Holy
 “ Ghost,” which, I hope, is given unto you.
 I need not tell you that it is the most important
 of all others, for it is nothing less than preaching
 the unsearchable Riches of *Christ*, and winning
 Souls to him. You, I suppose, may expect in

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your

your Flock, as there are in most others, People of every Character, and of every Circumstance, good and bad, rich and poor, sick and well, learned and unlearned, wise and foolish, tractable and untractable, peaceable and turbulent: You must make it your Business, therefore, to suit your Temper, Discourses and Conduct, to all of these, or, as the Apostle expresses it, “ become
 “ all Things to all Men, in order to save some
 “ of them.” You may now be asking in your own Mind, who is sufficient for all these Things? the Question is just and pertinent, but the Answer to it is equally so, which is this, our Sufficiency is of God. We have this Treasure, as you heard well handled in the Sermon, in *earthen Vessels*, that the Excellency of the Power may appear to be of God, and not of Men. Go forth therefore, in his Strength, making mention of his Righteousness, even of his only; maintain a close, a constant Correspondence with him, by humble Prayer and Supplication, for in him are all your Springs. Set him always before you, to direct you in your Way, to assist and to protect you in it. He can supply all your Need according to his Riches in Glory, by *Jesus Christ*.

My sincere Wishes for you are contained in the Words of the Apostle to the *Thessalonians*, and the *Hebrews*, for better I cannot use; they are these: “ May the Lord *Jesus Christ* himself, “ and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, “ and given us everlasting Consolation, and good “ Hope, through Grace, strengthen, stablish, “ settle you.” And “ may the God of Peace, who “ brought again from the Dead the Lord *Jesus Christ*, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro’ “ the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make “ you perfect, to do his Will, working in you “ that which is well pleasing in his Sight; to “ him be Glory for ever and ever.” I cannot conclude, without expressing the like good Wishes to your Reverend and worthy Colleague, and the Church of *Christ*, of which the Chief Shepherd has now made you joint Overseers.—May his Blessing be upon your united Labours, and make his Work to prosper in your Hands, that. in the great Day, you may present yourselves, and the spiritual Children whom he hath given you, before the Presence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy.
Amen.

F I N I S.

the Presence of the Spirit, with exceeding joy,
 spiritual Children, whom he has given you, in his
 great Day, you will receive, and the
 his Word to you, "I have said, that in this
 blessing be upon you, and upon your labour, and make
 him now make you joint Overseers—May the
 Church of Christ, of which the Chief Shepherd
 is your Ransomed and worthy Colleague, and the
 conclude, without expecting the like good Will as
 that the Glory, for ever and ever." I cannot
 that which is well pleasing in his Sight; so
 you part, so do his Will, working in you
 the blood of the everlasting Covenant, made
 Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, that
 "brought again from the Dead the Lord Jesus
 for you." And "may the God of Peace, who
 bring through Grace, strengthen, establish,
 and given us everlasting Comfort, and
 and God, even our Father, who hath loved us,
 are there; "May the Lord Jesus Christ himself,
 and the Holy Spirit for ever, I cannot say; may
 the Word of the Apostle to the Romans,
 My sincere Wishes for you are continued

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